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Municipal Trade: The Advantages and Disadvantages Resulting from the Substitution of Representative Bodies for Private Proprietors in the Management of Industrial Undertakings. By LEONARD DARWIN. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1903. 8vo, pp. xxiv + 464.

The Common Sense of Municipal Trading. By BERNARD SHAW. Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1904. 12mo, pp. 120.

Here are presented two discussions of the same politico-economic problem, alike in the exhibition of a rare charm and delightful style, and in occasional agreement in conclusions drawn from the application of theories presented, and unlike in everything else. They are so unlike, in fact, that to place their names in such close juxtaposition seems almost the perpetration of an undignified joke.

They are unlike in the public to which they are addressed. Major Darwin speaks to those "who do not admit the practicability of any great or sudden socialistic revolution, but who are nevertheless anxious to consider every socialistic proposal separately on its own merits" (p. 284), and writes in order to bring about what he hopes may be a saner and sounder attitude of mind on the part of the British public with reference to the rapidly increasing body of enterprises undertaken, owned, and managed by the governing bodies of British localities.

Mr. Shaw speaks straight to the British voter "on the eve of the London County election, at which municipal trading is one of the two important questions to be determined."

The two writers are unlike in point of view. Major Darwin is still a believer in the advantages of the present individualistic basis of economic organization, but, admitting its cruelty, injustice, and waste (p. 286), he is willing to accept so much of the socialistic program as can justify itself on economic, social, or political grounds. For the purpose of learning which can so justify themselves, he scrutinizes, from each of these points of view, those enterprises which have been taken over by the public, and those which it has been seriously proposed to take over. He concludes that the more competitive the enterprise, the more disadvantageous will be the result of public management; but when a service is monopolistic in character and social in purpose, or fraught with possibility of danger to the public health and comfort, it should be taken over and managed by the

public authorities. "The domestic water supply, markets, public baths, slaughter-houses, and cemeteries had better not be in private hands." Other undertakings subject to the law of increasing returns and tending to become monopolistic, and so needing more or less control, and seemingly suited to public management—the supply of gas and electric light, and transportation facilities—he still holds better in the hands of private enterprise. The substance of the argument is that the burden of proof is on those who favor the public control and they have not proved their case.

Mr. Shaw finds the proper limitation of municipal trading not so much in the nature of the undertaking as in the extent of the demand for the product.

The demand . . . must be sufficiently extensive and constant to keep the necessary plant fully employed (p. 12). . . . All such public business of sufficient magnitude to keep the necessary plant working full time until it has paid for itself, can, when it is purely local, be done more cheaply by municipal than by private enterprise (p. 16).

As to the success of the municipal housing schemes, Mr. Shaw and Major Darwin agree that they have failed to accomplish the purpose to which they were directed. At no point would their views be more thoroughly opposed, however, than in the reasons each would give for the fact of failure.

They likewise take issue on the question of the proper use for such profits to issue from municipal undertakings. Major Darwin would have them applied to the reduction of the taxpayers' burden; Mr. Shaw sees for such enterprise no other aim than "to provide public services at cost prices" (p. 86).

Major Darwin urges the necessity of reform in methods of municipal bookkeeping, in order that the exact condition of their finances and the true effect of their operations may be more accurately and frankly exhibited. Mr. Shaw urges that, when their financial conditions are known, their value may be estimated, not as isolated phenomena in comparison with private industrial undertakings, but in connection with burdens placed upon the taxpayer as the result of the capitalistic organization of industry, and with the services rendered by these public operations which cannot be estimated in shillings and pence.

The American reader cannot lay aside these two discussions without realizing how fundamentally the problem which presents itself to the British voter differs now from that which is offered in our

cities. The supineness and inactivity of municipal authorities may furnish Major Darwin with argument in favor of private enterprise, and may exasperate Mr. Shaw, whose belief in the ultimate beneficencies of public activity is fused with a keenly humorous appreciation of human frailty; but neither takes into consideration the possibility of corruption in the civil service which stares in the face and appals the student of American civic life. "A man who behaves himself and does his work has nothing to fear in public employment, his income and position are permanently assured" (Shaw, p. 10), could not be written of our civil service. The question is, of course, finally one of politics, to be settled in accord with the interests of the entire community. Major Darwin presents the considerations affecting those members of the community who have; Mr. Shaw principally thinks of those who have not. Both see that many activities of an industrial character must be pursued by the community in its corporate capacity. The question is rather where to draw the line. For both, and for the American student of civic affairs, the line is clearly to be drawn so as to include an honest civil service.

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Out of Work: A Study of Employment Agencies, Their Treatment of the Unemployed and Their Influence upon Homes and Business. By FRANCES A. KELLOR. Published for the Inter-Municipal Committee on Household Research. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904. 12mo, pp. vii + 292.

"Give a man a comfortable income and you solve for him all the questions, except perhaps the servant question." In this statement Mr. Shaw implies that there is one question well-nigh insoluble. An encouraging fact to be noticed in connection with the question which is not even answered by the possession of a comfortable income is that it is now being attacked, not only with serious realization of the need for a remedy because of the universal discomfort experienced by both mistress and maid; but with the recognition of its economic importance and of its close interdependence with other phases of the labor question. It is consequently coming to be understood that upon this problem, too, must be brought to bear expert methods of investigation and research, as well as generous desire for social amelioration.

It would be difficult to find any other relationships so uncertain